

Inside

Reader feedback
"It's important because for us in the military, the outcome decides our fate," said Pvt. 2 Brent Workman in this week's feedback on voting. See page 2 for more.



Musical return
Wiesbaden high school band members welcome home their counterparts in the 1st Armored Division from duty in Iraq. See page 5.



Duking it out in Dexheim
Boxers treat fight fans to a night of fast-paced ring action at the open and novice boxing tournament. See page 28.



Herald Union



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March 16, 2004

News flash

Demonstrations

Several demonstrations will be held March 20. The demonstrations are planned to coincide with the anniversary of the beginning of the war in Iraq. Demonstrations are planned to be held in and around Landstuhl and Ramstein Air Base (start at noon and end at 4:30 p.m.), Heidelberg's Campbell Barracks (start at 11:30 a.m.), downtown Stuttgart (2-5:30 p.m.) and near the Brussels train station (2 p.m.). No violence is planned or expected; however, violence cannot be ruled out, officials said. U.S. Army Europe personnel are advised to avoid these and all other demonstrations. Should they inadvertently enter a demonstration site they should depart as discreetly and quickly as possible, officials said. (IMA-E Public Affairs)

Iraq casualty

Spc. Michael R. Woodliff, age 22, of Friedberg's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, and Port Charlotte, Fla., died March 2 in Baghdad when an improvised explosive device struck his convoy.

Sex assault hotline

The Defense Department has established a toll-free telephone number for individuals to provide information to the Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assault. The hotline, (800) 497-6261, is staffed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time weekdays. "Every service member deserves to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity," said David S.C. Chu, under secretary of Defense. "Sexual assault is criminal conduct and will not be tolerated in the Department of Defense. Information gathered from the call center will assist the task force and defense officials in developing policies and programs to improve assistance for victims of assaults and enhance prevention efforts, Chu said. (DoDNews)

SOFA update

Germany-based U.S. forces members required to have new certificate

Local passport offices are issuing a new Status of Forces Agreement certificate for Germany-based U.S. forces to replace SOFA stamps in passports.

"After decades of issuing rubber stamp or paper copy SOFA certificates with tourist passports for U.S. forces personnel in Germany, the new certificate represents a dramatic step forward in modernizing our system," said John Chaisson, 1st Personnel Command's senior personal affairs specialist.

"It replaces manual control logs with a computerized database and employs a hologram, special paper and other security features to minimize the potential for forgery," Chaisson said.

Another important feature is an expiration date, which will preclude individuals no longer associated with the U.S. forces from claiming status under the SOFA if they remain in Germany.

The new certificate is a separate laminated document that will be carried with the passport.

There will be a one-year transition period to allow people time to acquire the new certificate. The deadline is Jan. 15, 2005. After that, German officials will no longer recognize the current SOFA stamp in U.S. tourist passports for entry into Germany.

Uniformed members of the U.S. forces in Germany do not need these

certificates, nor do civilians who possess an official passport containing a SOFA stamp issued by the State Department. The official passport, also known as a "no-fee" passport because it was issued by the State Department at no cost to the individual, may be red or blue, and is marked "official."

"However civilians associated with the U.S. forces, employees and family members who possess only a tourist passport, must have their existing SOFA certificate replaced with the new one if they will still be in Germany after Jan. 15, 2005," said Chaisson. "Only personnel with an official passport are exempt from getting the new certificate. They should contact their local passport processing office — colocated with installation ID card sections — to make arrangements for certificate replacement."

While the initiative represents only a format change to the certificate, the importance of obtaining the new certificate should not be underestimated. In addition to serving as an entry permit, the certificate is tangible proof that authorized U.S. personnel are eligible for tax- and duty-free shopping at the exchange and commissaries, for gas coupons and other benefits U.S. forces enjoy under the SOFA. (Courtesy of the Installation Management Agency-Europe Public Affairs Office)



Photo by Karl Weisel

Michael Hamm, an outreach coordinator with Army Community Service, facilitates a discussion with Hanau Middle School students about reintegration issues and concerns.

Coming home

Outreach workers address students' issues, concerns

By Karl Weisel
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

"It'll take the pressure off."
That's how one Hanau Middle

School eighth-grader described his expectations about the homecoming of his parent from Operation Iraqi Freedom. About 150 students talked about their feelings and concerns during a session with staff and volunteers from Army Community Service at the school March 10.

See **Coming home**
on page 4

Reintegration briefing slated for March 23

Senior U.S. Army Europe staff members will conduct an information briefing for family members of USAREUR Soldiers deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 10 a.m. to noon March 23 at the Community Activity Center on Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

The briefing will be shown via video teleconference to other locations within the 104th Area Support Group — at each base support

battalion, each 1st Armored Division brigade, the 104th ASG and Division Engineer in Giessen.

Family members of deployed Soldiers from the 104th ASG footprint, which includes the military communities of Baumholder, Büdingen, Dexheim, Friedberg, Giessen, Hanau and Wiesbaden are invited and strongly encouraged to attend. People who cannot drive to Wiesbaden Army Airfield may attend at any of the VTC locations.

The purpose of the two-hour briefing is to inform family members what to expect during the reintegration process when deployed Soldiers return to rejoin their families and units. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of subject matter experts.

Interested families should contact their Family Support Group or BSB for additional details. (104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office)

Commentary

Feedback: Do you think voting is important? Why or why not?



Lauran Ford
284th Base Support Battalion family member

"Yes — it decides your future, who you elect."



Chaplain (Maj.) Charles M. Ehrhart
284th Base Support Battalion deputy chaplain

"Yes, it's important. It's even more important to vote by our conscience, rather than listening to the media, because the media have elected our last two presidents. You need to learn what's going on and then make your decision."



Sgt. Juan Sanchez
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Corps Support Group

"It's very important. It's important on who you want your leader to be. I've been watching television, reading the newspaper. I've made up my mind already."



Liz Larsen
4th Brigade family member

"Yes, I think voting's important because it's our democratic right and our responsibility as American citizens. If you don't vote, you have no right to complain."



Spc. Adam Gilbert
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion

"It's important because you need to be able to decide your future, but on the other hand, as was shown in the elections of 2000, the majority is not always the winner."

Vote for a strong America

Commentary by Christine June
Special to the Herald Union

I was stationed in Washington, D.C., during an election year, and the voting craze was everywhere, even in the water.

I managed to avoid it until a close friend reminded me of something I had learned in junior high school. It was Friday night, and instead of vegetating in front of the television I was sitting conspicuously alone at a Vietnamese restaurant, waiting for my friend, Nah, who was late, as usual.

When she eventually showed, it was with an apologetic smile and a quick, "Chrissy, I'm sorry." The conversation, or more accurately, the battle, began as soon as the waitress left.

Nah explained that she had registered to vote that afternoon. Having just become a new citizen, Nah was excited about the whole voting process.

"I thought registering to vote would really be complicated, but I filled in all the information, showed my certificate of naturalization, gave my oath and that was it. It took five minutes, if that," she said.

"I've been trying to read about the views of the presidential candidates. It takes me over an hour to read one article. I have stacks and stacks of newspapers and magazines to read," she said, using her hands to exaggerate about how tall they were. "I just hope I can figure out who I'm going to vote for before the election. I'm not sure who ..."

"Nah," I said in a tone of pure frustration, "just close your eyes and pick one."

At first Nah laughed. Then she realized I wasn't kidding. "You can't be serious?"

"Why not?"

"Because that's a foolish way to help elect one of the most powerful men in the world. That's why not."

"Nah, you've been reading too many ..."

"You're not seriously going to vote that way," said Nah, "are you?"

Quite honestly, I said, "No."

She was clearly relieved. "Have you decided who you're going to vote for?"

Again, honestly, "No."

"I haven't either. It's like on one hand ..."

Oh no, not again. I just wasn't in the mood

for a political discussion, especially on voting. By this time I was tired of this "voting craze," not just from Nah, but from everyone. Even John Cougar Mellencamp was telling me that I should vote because my vote counted. Who was he kidding? My one little vote meant absolutely nothing in the big scheme of things.

"I'm just so excited about it, and I've never done it before. And, I ... I just want to talk about it," said Nah.

I lowered my eyes, played with my fork. "I know."

Nah asked suddenly, "Have you registered to vote?"

Far too quickly, I said, "No."

"No," Nah repeated, as if it were the most inconceivable notion she had ever heard of.

I realized my mistake. "In the military we use the absentee ballot

because we move around so much," I said.

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't enjoy the conversation. I had never lied to Nah. I didn't come right out and tell her that I wasn't going to vote, but I knew she thought I was going to. I couldn't bear it any longer. "Nah, I'm not voting this year." Or any other year for that matter, I added, though only in my thoughts. She didn't say anything.

"Nah, it's not that big of a deal."

In a voice that didn't seem to belong to her, Nah said, "My parents would have given anything to have been able to vote."

"This isn't Vietnam. What happened there won't ever happen here. Age has absolutely nothing to do with it."

She didn't look at me. She just sat there, staring. "What does it have to do with?"

"Strength. America is strong."

"Why is America a strong country?"

"Because the people have the power, not the government."

Quick as a mountain lion, Nah leaped toward her prey. "How do the people exercise that power?"

I knew the answer, and of course Nah knew the answer, but neither of us said anything. We just stared at each other.

Then I dropped my eyes and quietly said, "They vote." (Courtesy of the 26th Area Support Group's Herald-Post newspaper)

SNAP experts say 'Stay alert'

Current world events require all U.S. personnel to maintain a high level of personal situational awareness. Suspicious behavior should be reported immediately to local Military Police, said Safe Neighborhood Awareness Program officials.

Do not wait for a spouse or neighbor to come home before calling the MP desk. Timely

reports are essential to investigators.

If a suspicious person leaves before the MPs arrive, the most accurate description possible of both people and vehicles can be invaluable. Stay alert and remember as many details as possible.

You can make a difference in your neighborhood. Stay alert. (IMA-Europe Release)

Herald Union

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News and features

News flash

CYS block leave policy

Parents participating in block leave following deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom are benefiting from a new Child and Youth Services policy which provides up to four weeks of leave per year with no fees and retention of their child's space. The change doubled the former CYS leave policy providing for two weeks per year without charges or loss of the CYS space. The additional two weeks can only be taken in conjunction with the block leave period. If parents already used any or all of their normal two-week annual leave before taking block leave, that amount of leave will be deducted from the four-week total. Parents wishing to take more than four weeks will be required to pay fees to retain the child care space. (TMA-E Public Affairs)

Register to vote

While Nov. 2 is still eight months away, it's not too early to make sure you and your eligible family members are registered to vote. Each base support battalion has voting assistance officers available to help community members obtain and fill out their state voter registration applications. For voting assistance in Baumholder call Master Sgt. Reed at mil 484-7138 or Ms. Tyler at mil 485-7557, in Wiesbaden call Mr. Cullen at mil 337-6150 or Ms. Pergola at mil 337-7068, in Giessen call Mr. Miller at mil 343-8996, in Hanau call Capt. Phelps at mil 322-1610. The 104th Area Support Group voting assistance officers in Hanau are Mr. Cheney at mil 323-3001 and Master Sgt. Bowers at mil 322-1380. Voting help is also available online at the Federal Voting Assistance website, www.fvap.gov. Follow the instructions under publications and forms to download a Federal Postcard Application and instructions for your state. (104th ASG Adjutant)

Fire Officer of Year

Artur Meister, fire inspector for the 414th Base Support Battalion, was named the 104th Area Support Group's Fire Officer of the Year for 2003. Col. George A. Latham II, 104th ASG commander, presented Meister with a plaque and certificate March 3 recognizing his "outstanding technical expertise and advice to consulting architects, for improving German-American friendship, and for professionally handling hazardous material matters in the Hanau military community."



IMO conference set for March 31

All signal officers, information management officers and interested personnel are invited to attend the 102nd Signal Battalion's Information Management Officer Conference March 31 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Wiesbaden Activities Center on Wiesbaden Army Airfield. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Topics will include help desk procedures, training, Windows 2000 and server consolidation. Call Winfred Robinson at mil 337-5929.

Jobs downrange

Kellogg Brown and Root will recruit for positions in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan April 7-9 in Wiesbaden. Positions include logistics, food service, communications, construction, administration, emergency services, security, computer and operations. Applicants must be able to meet all qualifications, be available to start work within 60 days, submit a resume of no more than three pages and attend a KBR orientation briefing which will be held at the Wiesbaden Dining Facility in Building 1052 from 9-10 a.m. on those dates. Non-U.S. citizens may apply, but they must be fluent in English and submit resumes in English. Contact the Wiesbaden Army Career and Alumni Program Office at mil 337-5847, civ (0611) 705-5847 for more information.



Photos by Dennis Johnson

Supplying them with smiles

Sgt. Michael Espitia, 26th Quartermaster Supply Company, holds his four-month-old son, Sebastian, during a homecoming ceremony at Hanau's Hutier Kaserne March 8. Twenty-six Soldiers of the company, part of the 485th Corps Support Battalion, returned at 11:30 p.m. after serving for a year in Iraq. Photo right: Moana Reid, age 4, Robert Espitia, 9, and Michael Espitia, 7, hold up a banner to welcome home 26th Quartermaster Soldiers.

MPs lauded for excellence Teamwork, German-American relations cited

By Anemone Rueger

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

The 221st Base Support Battalion Provost Marshal's Office was named the 104th Area Support Group's best PMO March 5.

Col. Brian F. Bocklage, U.S. Army Europe provost marshal, cited the 221st BSB PMO's outstanding teamwork and close German-American relations in awarding the Marechaussee Award.

"It's all about teamwork," said Bocklage, referring to cooperation between the BSBs and the ASG as well as cooperation with German counterparts. "I applaud you for that relationship."

A recent case of a runaway American teen demonstrated the results of this strong partnership, officials said. After the 15-year-old Wiesbaden youth ran away, the 221st BSB PMO immediately notified their German counterparts. "We sent the BOLO [be on the lookout] to the German Police," said Maj. S.M. "Jake" Jacob, 221st BSB provost marshal. "Within 24 hours two female German Police officers found her in downtown Frankfurt and returned her to Wiesbaden."

In addition to host nation relations, the Marechaussee Award recognizes physical fitness, weapons qualification, general and financial management over the calendar year. "It was my idea to have an excellence award to promote competition between the BSBs so they could measure themselves against themselves, and at the end of the day they would be recognized," said Lt. Col. Howard Malone, 104th ASG provost marshal. "Actually it's more competing against the standard than against one another."

The award is named in honor of the so-called Marechaussee — Soldiers on horseback who provided rear security for Gen. George Washington's Army during the American Revolutionary War. Their duties included patrolling roads, watching out for spies and protecting Washington's headquarters. "When we [the MP Corps] did research on these guys we found out their orders were essentially what we do today," said Malone.

The first competition was held in 2002 with three out of four BSBs scoring the same — "very high," said Malone. "It was the bonus points that got Wiesbaden slightly ahead of Baumholder. But this time they clearly pulled away in all categories."

"We have great Soldiers, civilians and local nationals working for us, and the BSB leadership provides outstanding support," said Jacob. "We work with the German Police every day."

Besides the plaque and recognition, the 221st BSB PMO received \$5,000 from the 104th ASG PMO.

During the ceremony Pfc. Casey Stilson of 4th Platoon, 92nd MP Company, was named the 104th ASG Patrolman of the Month for helping apprehend an individual. This is a new award launched this month by the 104th ASG PMO.



Photo by Mary Crawford

Feline guest speaker

The Cat in the Hat, alias Shonna Flanagan, makes an appearance at Gelnhausen Elementary School March 2 during Read Across America Day on the occasion of the 100th birthday of Theodore Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss to his millions of fans.

News and features

Operation Guardian Angel

Family, friends asked to help keep returning Soldiers safe

By Spc. Kristopher Joseph
V Corps Public Affairs Office

Coming home is sweet relief for deployed Soldiers who have essentially been "on duty" 24 hours a day, seven days a week. After spending up to a year enduring dangerous missions, work shifts of 12 hours or more and limited contact with loved ones, a Soldier can come home downright drained — and looking to let the good times roll.

But being deployed actually has one advantage; it puts Soldiers in the care of their fellow service members 24/7. That means they get constant reminders to be cautious. Now V Corps leaders want to enlist some help in keeping Soldiers "full-time safe" at home as well, by literally "hitting them where they live" with a new program called Operation Guardian Angel. OGA, the brainchild of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Darrel "D" Smith, V Corps' aviation safety officer, is meant to help keep Soldiers safe even when they're beyond the reach of military leadership.

"While deployed, units become more cohesive. Buddies take care of each other and watch each other's backs," said Smith, who is helping the U.S. Army Safety Center to develop the OGA concept for Army-wide implementation. "Once they

return ... they no longer have the safety net provided by their buddies downrange.

"Life will be much different, and they will face a readjustment period," he said. "Suddenly returning home, they find themselves in a strange environment; driving will be much different than what they are used to downrange; rules of the road are definitely different, (and) social interaction or over-indulgence can be a challenge. That's why we need families, friends and folks who care to provide safety oversight during this time of vulnerability. Our Soldiers need the help of a Guardian Angel."

"This will reinforce the safety briefings that Soldiers already receive downrange," Smith added. "Getting family and friends involved in the welfare of Soldiers [adds] a meaningful, personal aspect that Soldiers can identify with."

"We're asking for people to continue to support, and possibly save the lives of, our great troops while they reintegrate," said Col. David K. Macewen, V Corps personnel officer.

Macewen pointed out that the Guardian Angel program is much like the Army's "battle buddy" system that pairs Soldiers up for safety, but with a relative or a close acquaintance acting as a "buddy."



Stars shine on Dexheim

Dexheim Elementary School students point to stars hanging in the school's lobby representing parents deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Ora Flippen-Casper, school principal, launched the project after reading an article in the *Washington Post* about how stateside schools were recognizing Soldiers. Almost 80 percent of the student population has a deployed parent. "My dad has been gone a very long time," said first-grader, Eleni Noisiotis. "The stars are here to help me to remember him and for others to know and be proud of him."

Students

Continued from page 1

While middle-schoolers described how the overall stress of separation and worry would be relieved, ACS officials tried to impress upon the youths that reunion takes time and can cause additional stress in a family if people have false expectations.

"You need to start communicating with them and think about what you're going to do when they come home," said Michael Hamm, outreach coordinator for the 414th Base Support Battalion's ACS.

Staying in touch by email, letter

and telephone are crucial to maintaining a personal relationship between youths and their parents who are serving in Kuwait and Iraq, added Princetta Wright, another 414th BSB outreach coordinator. "There are going to be some events that your parents have missed while they were away. Just realize that while Mom or Dad may have missed some special events, you still need to talk about how you feel with a parent."

While spouses may keep a close relationship via email and other forms of communication during a deployment such as Operation Iraqi

Freedom, children are sometimes left out of the process, said ACS volunteer Jenny Peaster. "When they come home, they'll be even more of a stranger to you if your Mom and Dad stay in touch, but you don't," said Peaster. That's why it is so vital that children too stay in touch during a prolonged separation, Peaster told the Hanau middle-schoolers.

One boy said he talked to his father about once a month. One girl said she emailed her father every other day. Because spouses tend to dominate phone calls and emails with deployed Soldiers, maintaining something of an ongoing dialogue, it is often the children who have the most catching up to do when parents reappear, said Peaster.

"The kids are more cut off. They're the ones who are going to have to really reintegrate," she said.

Students expressed how they imagine their parents will be once they are home.

"They're going to be nervous," said one.

"You're going to be in trouble," said another.

"They're going to be all weird," said one youngster.

"They're going to be tired," said a fourth.

Mickey Bruner said he'd been in touch with his father, a 69th Chemical Company Soldier working on trucks in central Baghdad, about once a week via email.

"I'm just worried," said Bruner, explaining his concern was about his father's safety, not the consequences of his return to Hanau, "a



Photo by Karl Weisel

Princetta Wright and Michael Hamm talk to Hanau Middle School students about the challenges and expectations of reintegration.

plane crash or something like that."

Students should expect that their parent may seem different after returning from serving in such a dangerous part of the world as Iraq, said Hamm. "They're seeing kids who look just like you shooting at them and throwing rocks. ... What we're seeing from some of the people coming back is that they look at the world differently. ... They also may be eating differently — eating a lot less. They may have trouble sleeping," said Hamm.

A returning parent may have trouble adjusting to the fact that children have taken on many of the chores and responsibilities formerly performed by the adult.

"The child may do more when Dad is gone," said Peaster. "Maybe your grades aren't that great this year because you were expected to do more around the house and your

mom was stressed. It may take some time for your dad to get readjusted. We just want you guys to be realistic. There are issues to be worked out."

"My dad was downrange," said Melissa Salgado, one of several eighth-graders whose fathers had already returned. She was already dealing with the consequences of the yearlong separation.

"It's been the same, but he's been more protective," she said. "When my brother or sister get in trouble, he takes it out on me." On the other hand, the family has spent more time together since his return, she said. "We've been able to go to more places, and it's been easier to depend on both parents."

Did she have any advice for her fellow students?

"Just behave," she said. (*David Ruderman contributed to this article*)

Families needed to ‘adopt’ Soldiers

By Cassandra Kardeke
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Several homecoming celebrations have been held throughout the Wiesbaden area as units continue to trickle back into the community after a long deployment to Iraq. Husbands, wives and children have awakened in the pre-dawn hours to wait at Hangar 1036 for their unit’s return.

After brief remarks from unit commanders, Soldiers are released to the embraces of their loved ones. But what about the single Soldier, the Soldier who left nothing behind other than personal belongings?

As Soldiers are released into the embraces of their families, it can be easy to forget the Soldier with no one to welcome him or her home — no one there with flowers and hugs.

One Family Readiness Group leader is working diligently to ensure that doesn’t happen to single Soldiers in her unit.

“We tend to concentrate on the families so much that we forget there are Soldiers out there who have no family here and no one to welcome them home,” said Amy George, FRG leader for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armored Division. Not wanting to leave one Soldier out of the unit’s homecoming, George decided to contact her unit’s company commander down-range to see what she could do.

“When Amy contacted me it reminded me of what happened when I returned from Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo,” said Capt. Thomas Brashears, HHC commander.

Brashears recalled returning home with his unit and marching to the Catering Center for the Welcome Home ceremony. At the end of his then-commander’s speech, single Soldiers were dismissed while families were told that they could now “welcome home their loved ones.”

“I swore to myself that night that if I was ever on another deployment and in a position to affect the reception of Soldiers as they came home ... I would never let a travesty like that occur again,” Brashears said.

With the help of Brashears, George is now in charge of the unit’s “Adopt a Soldier” program. With more than 60 single Soldiers in the unit, George is trying to find families willing to adopt a Soldier and welcome him or her home properly.

Families interested in adopting a single Soldier can call her at mil 337-6510 or civ (0611) 705-6510.

Once a family adopts a Soldier, George provides an information packet to give the family ideas on how they can help make the Soldier’s homecoming a happy one.

“They can send him or her an email introducing themselves and ask questions to learn more about each other,” George said.

George provides the family with questions to ask to help them learn more about the Soldier’s likes and dislikes. The family then can plan out how to ease the Soldier’s homecoming and return to the community.

George suggested that the family help get involved with ensuring the returning Soldier’s barracks room is ready. For the most part,

accommodations will already be made for the Soldier’s living arrangements; however, a family can add a personal touch by leaving a welcome basket or something individual for the Soldier, she said. The most important thing about the entire process, however, is the welcome home ceremony.

“We want to be sure that the new ‘adoptive’ family is at the ceremony to welcome their Soldier home,” she said. As the time gets closer for the unit to return, George will ensure that the “adoptive” families are fully informed as to the time and location of the welcome ceremony.

With 10 Soldiers already adopted, George is getting the program off to a good start. “I’ve even adopted a soldier myself — Capt. Brashears,” she said.

Warriors welcome home 1st AD Band

By Jolly A. Sienda
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Cheers, hugs and kisses welcomed home members of the 1st Armored Division Band to Wiesbaden Army Airfield Feb. 21. The band returned to Wiesbaden after serving for nearly a year in Iraq.

“Today marks a very special day in the lives of the Soldiers and families of the 1st Armored Division. Here before us is the first redeployment of a divisional unit from the war on terrorism,” said Lt. Col. Michael Bean, rear

detachment commander of 1st AD, to the returning Soldiers and families waiting for their release.

“During their deployment to Iraq the band significantly improved the morale of the division by performing over 300 musical missions for over 30,000 Soldiers. They performed for such dignitaries as President George Bush, our commander in chief, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the sergeant major of the Army. The 1st Armored Division Band was also the first musical ensemble to play the Iraqi national anthem after the country’s liberation,” he said.

The band also opened for Kid Rock when he performed at Baghdad International Airport last summer and for actors Drew Carey and John Stamos.

“They are really our heroes. They gave so much of themselves to support better morale and offer a little musical enjoyment for all of the Soldiers and civilians in Iraq,” said Joyce Morse, wife of the unit’s commander, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew Morse. “Unfortunately they also performed at memorial ceremonies for fallen Soldiers, which must have been difficult to do.”

The Warrior Band of Wiesbaden’s Gen. H.H. Arnold High School played for the band and their families as a goodwill gesture at the Army band’s return ceremony.

“These kids are just so proud to be a part of this and play for their heroes.”
— **Steve Fedric**

“These kids are just so proud to be a part of this and play for their heroes,” said Steve Fedric, the high school band’s conductor. “The kids prepared for this event for three weeks, meeting every other day, so that they would play well for the returning Soldiers.”

“The 1st Armored Division Band has a strong connection to the Warrior Band,” said Dave Theis, Gen. H.H. Arnold’s assistant principal. “Staff Sgt. Mark Botwinick, who is one of the returning Soldiers here tonight, was one of my student’s years ago.”

Botwinick learned to play the clarinet, saxophone, gained an appreciation of jazz and learned conducting at the school, Theis said. “We are very proud of him and happy that he has come home safe.”